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A MODERN MOORISH INTERIOR.

BY LULU GUNCKEL.

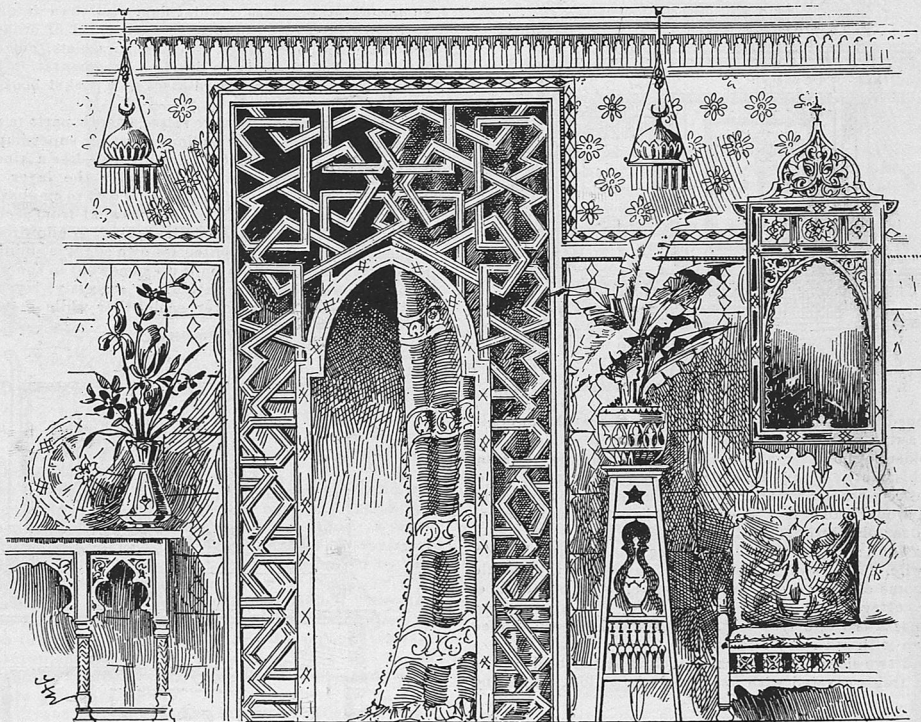


It is difficult to furnish a room suited to the intimate wants of the average American household, after a style so pre-eminently adapted to costly materials and palatial interiors, and we should not advise the scheme attempted, unless the Moorish effect can be obtained by the construction of the room, rather than by some few Moorish articles.

A Moorish interior! ah, the vision of beauty which rises before one at the mere utterance of the words. Gold and silver lamps hanging from stalactited ceilings, walls adorned with intricate arabesques, exquisite horse shoe arched windows and doorways, slender marble columns with delicately carved capitals, a dado of finest Azulejo tiles, an

The walls may be hung with a stamped leather paper of best quality, the arabesques heightened with much gold. A dado, in general effect darker than the main wall covering and divided from it by a hand rail of dark wood, on which may be secured; Arabic inscriptions cut from brass or some suitable metal, this decoration doing the double service of giving an extremely Oriental touch to the room and being most decorative in effect.

If the room in question is long and lacking the irregularities conducive to artistic effects, grille work of Moorish design, upheld by columns and a Moorish arch, may be thrown across the entire width of the apartment, about ten feet from the end, thus forming an alcove off the main room. Have the floor of the alcove a foot higher than that of the main room, giving the effect of a dais, and on this construct the divan, which, the more nearly it approaches a mattress covered with a rug the more Moorish it will be. The modernized divan must, however, be raised on a base. Cover this with cushions of all sizes in brilliant Oriental coloring. Our stores contain such limitless



A MOORISH HALL, WITH FRETTED ARCH.

alabaster fountain, birds of rare plumage in cages of gold and silver wire, rugs of Eastern weave, luxurious divans, ottomans and cushions galore all covered with the rarest of stuffs; through an arched doorway a garden revealing its trellises overhung with roses, orange and cypress trees, myrtle and box. A veritable garden of Lindaraja. Our Spanish possessions, they are real Moorish worthy the occupancy of a Boabdil.

But a practical interior, based on Moorish lines, adapted to the wants of an American household, sounds again in my ears; at first we say, impossible; but, after a hurried glance through the wonderfully stocked markets of New York, encouragement is breathed into us, and we proceed with strong hope of success.

As an approximate stalactited ceiling we may have our ceiling paneled with dark wood, with pendants at regular intervals in the design terminating in Moorish lanterns, the interstices between the panels ornamented with gilt arabesques.

varieties of Oriental materials that further instructions as to cushions is quite superfluous.

If this alcove can boast of a trio of horseshoe arched windows, or one large square window veiled with elaborate woodwork, a brass ewer against the dark background of a niche in the wall, a Moorish lantern, an Oriental brass jar holding a palm, it will indeed be a nook to be coveted.

So far, so Moorish, we say, but when we come to the question of additional furniture we shall be obliged to depart from our model as it is not suited to modern wants to recline on divans and cushions to the entire exclusion of chairs, however, to keep in spirit with the original design we would advise luxurious over-stuffed chairs covered with Oriental materials. Inlaid cabinets and tables will add greatly to the beauty of the room. Teakwood will also harmonize well.

It is impossible in our American homes to exclude the fireplace, so by exercising care in the treatment of it it will prove

## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

a valuable addition to our Moorish interior. There is manufactured in Seville a most lovely reproduction of the Moorish Azulijo tiles, and considerable importation takes place from there and from Morocco. They are of a pale clay, backed, squeezed into moulds, glazed on the surface with a white opaque enamel, and ornamented with designs in colors. The front of the mantel and the hearth may be constructed with the above tiles—preferably those with design in blue and brown.

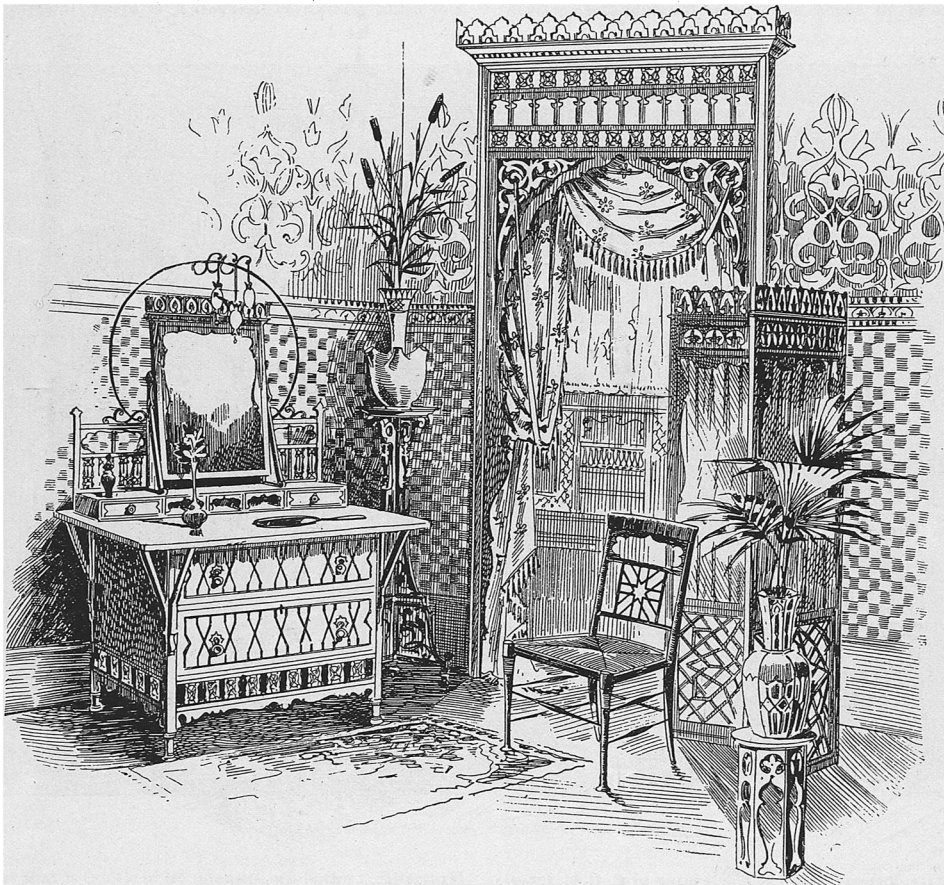
A cabinet over the mantel, made mostly from fine fretwork, with diminutive arches introduced, will prove a most fitting receptacle for a Moorish lamp, a dagger, a water jar, a vase of lusted ware, and a bit of exquisite Moorish embroidery all doing honor to the pièce de resistance, a real Hispano-Moorish plate painted in blue and copper lustre.

The portière par excellence for this room is an Oriental rug, which, to justify hanging it, should be of extremely fine

without the pictures which we are so accustomed to see smiling upon us from every available nook and corner, and oils or strong water colors, with subjects in harmony, will prove a great addition. Rigidly exclude, however, all black and white designs, photographs, etchings, etc.

In planning the decoration of the indispensable low inlaid Moorish tables, carry out the general scheme by a bit of Oriental coloring in a vase or a piece of embroidery. A folding bamboo table may be called into service when the tea is brought in on a round brass tray.

It would seem at first thought that we must relinquish all hope of the characteristic fountain which is so much the focus of a Moorish home life as the brightly burning logs is the family altar of our Northern climes, but the natural grasping inventiveness of the Yankee at once places his fountain in the center of a small circular conservatory adjoining his Moorish room.



MOORISH BED-ROOM FURNITURE.

texture. There are also innumerable beautiful materials suitable for hangings in rooms of this description, notably those Eastern fabrics with horizontal bars of different widths in silk and gold; they are obtainable in many different grades, from the sleazy cottons to a material which is like unto a cloth of gold.

A deep rich yellow will be the best predominating color for the rugs and draperies. It will prove less wearisome to the eyes than the Oriental blues and crimsons.

While the exact reproduction of natural object was proscribed by the Mohammedan religion, the intensely artistic nature of the Moor found vent in the exquisite conventional forms which are to be seen ornamenting every inch of wall and ceiling.

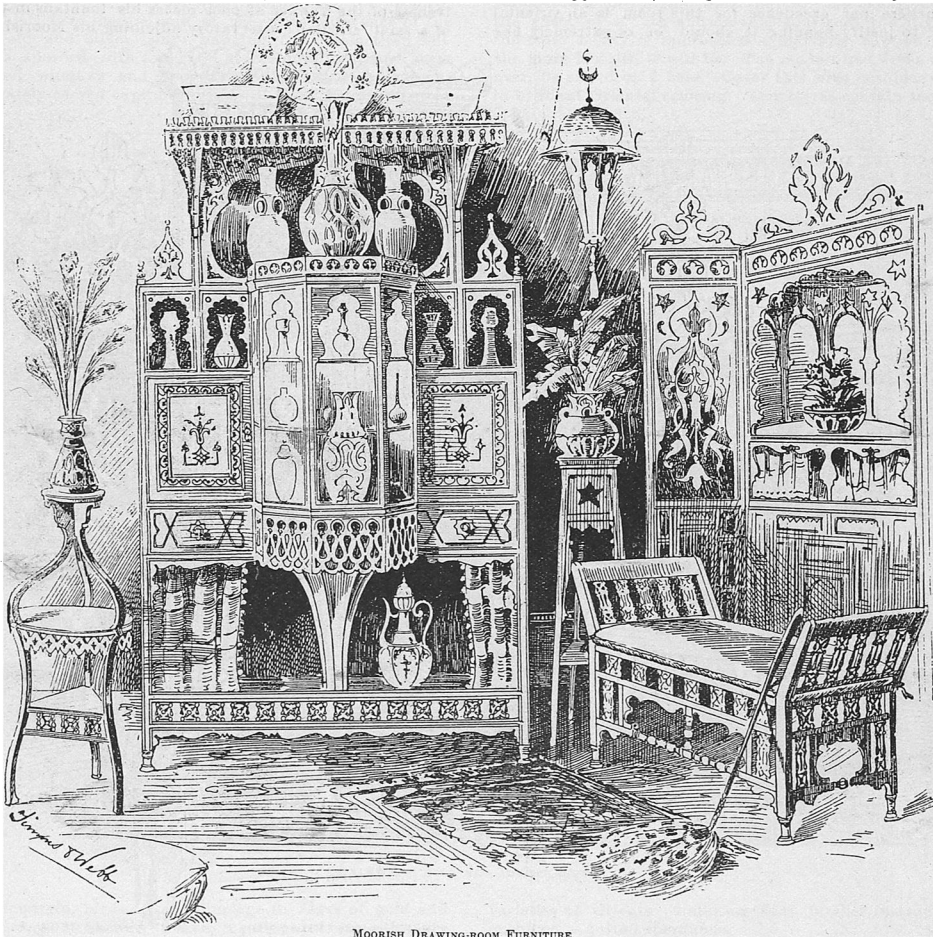
But in our modern Moorish interior we can hardly do

The interior of the ordinary Moorish house to American eyes will seem terribly bare of furniture. Here and there a recessed cupboard, or a strip of carpet, breaks the monotony, and a stained glass window or a lacquered lamp appear like an oasis in a desert of white wall. But in the higher class of houses the walls, floors and ceilings are frequently decorated in tiles of superb coloring, the design continuing from tile to tile, the forms and borders following the architecture, showing that the tiles were made especially for the room in which they are placed. Nothing can be imagined more fairylike and charming than rooms surrounded by this brilliant ceramic decoration when on it falls the light from a stained glass window, or wonderfully constructed lattice termed "meshrebee-yeh," frequently

spelled "mushrabiye," which is a name given to a species of Moorish lattice work, similar to Cairene lattice work; but the name itself in Mohammedan countries does not refer to the lattice, but signifies "A place for drink." One sees jutting out from the lattice window in Egypt and other Mohammedan countries quaint little projections, also in lattice work, forming an overhanging window. From the inside these projections are simply receptacles for water bottles to cool, for, being porous earthen vessels, the water within them is cooled by evaporation. This little niche is called a "mushrebee-yeh," and this has been supposed by modern furnishers to signify the entire window, and even the peculiar lattice work with which it is filled. Hence we have come at length to identify Oriental lattice work with the title "mushrabiye," and even with the

thus, with these easily obtainable, a Moorish apartment may be pretty accurately devised at comparatively low cost. It will be found necessary, however, to design various articles of furniture in the Moorish style which have had no existence in the land of the Caliphs, but in which the designer has infused the subtle spirit of Moorish art.

As an idea of just how these belongings out to be constructed, we present an illustration of a Moorish hall, in which the doorway is filled with a fretted arch, there being also seen a wall mirror, lounge, table and flower stand. There is also given an illustration of Moorish drawing-room furniture. Here we have endeavored to design an every-day cabinet, with a thoroughly Moorish effect. In order to give this article a truly Oriental appearance, it ought to be made of unpolished wood,



MOORISH DRAWING-ROOM FURNITURE.

curt and colloquial "mush." This kind of window admits the air, while it excludes the rays of the sun, and as a further advantage allows the occupants of the dwelling to see abroad, whilst their privacy is retained. The windows of a harem are always enclosed with lattice work, and in "The Bride of Abdallah," it will be remembered that one of the daughters of Arabia sings:

"Then rise, oh rise, Xarifa! lay the golden cushion down,  
Unseen here through the lattice you may gaze on all the town."

Now, in furnishing a house or room in the true Moorish style, it is, of course, quite proper to obtain a genuine Moorish or rather Cairene coffee tables, carved and inlaid cabinets, embroidered silken curtains, lattice work and carpets, and

inlaid with silver or aluminum. The doors of the projecting cupboard may be covered with arches, as shown in the sketch. The long settee in front of the cabinet is much in the nature of a Cairene stool, but the table is much more applicable to our Western ideas.

The screen is suggestive of a departure from the familiar arrangement of Oriental screens. We have provided a semi-circular recess in the middle fold of the screen.

The third illustration represents a corner of a bedroom. There is a screened window, and overhanging the top of the dressing table a Moorish band of metal that arches over the glass and supports three small fairy lamps. The quaint device and the pattern of the chair are all in keeping with the style not expressed in average furniture.